Foreign companies in oil exploration

699. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that oil exploration has been thrown open to international players, if so what are the details in this regard;

(b) whether it is a fact that 60 per cent of the oil exploration area is already brought under the licensing regime; if so, the details of the foreign investors to whom license has been issued so far and the FDI brought in by each of the investors; and

(c) whether the remaining oil exploration area would also be licensed to the foreign companies; if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) To attract investments in exploration of oil and gas, the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), which was approved by the Government in February, 1997, provides a level playing field for both public sector companies and private sector companies, both Indian and Foreign, for the award of exploration acreages under the international competitive bidding.

(b) At present about 70% of the acreages under exploration are under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) regime through various private sector and public sector companies. However, information on the foreign direct investment is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

Black marketing of CNG

†700. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the black marketing of CNG at the various filling stations in New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether Government will take measure for opening of more filling stations to check such black marketing and to provide CNG in adequate quantity; and

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.